

AMMAA NEWS

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Editor
Movses B. Janbazian



Some of the leaders of the Armenian Evangelical churches in Armenia.

"Being Obedient to the Heavenly Vision"

By Movses B. Janbazian

"Being Obedient to the Heavenly Vision". This is the theme of the 15th Biennial Convention of the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America (AEUNA). The words are taken from one of the apostle Paul's statements made at his defense before King Agrippa.

Upon the completion of his third missionary journey, Paul encounters fierce opposition in Jerusalem. The Jews of Asia Minor accuse him of disobeying the law of Moses, defaming the chosen people of God and desecrating the Temple of Jerusalem. They are about to kill Paul when Roman soldiers arrest him, and after lengthy interrogations take him to King Agrippa to defend himself against his accusers.

* * *

At the climactic point of his testimony given before King Agrippa, Paul tells about a heavenly vision he has seen. He explains how, after that vision, he changed and became a new person, and how Jesus Christ called him and commissioned him as an apostle. Then he concludes his defense by saying, "I did not prove disobedient to the heavenly vision" (Acts 26:19).

"Being obedient to the heavenly vision" is a most appropriate theme for a convention of churches that sincerely seek to shape their vision for a new millennium. Heavenly visions are not like visions created by human beings. They have a timeless and universal quality. Heavenly visions are like the Word of God; they last as long as the heavens. Paul's vision was not a figment of his human imagination. It was a heavenly vision, and that is why it is a timely vision for us and our churches now, and it will be a timely vision for all Christians and churches in the years and millennia to come.

But what was Paul's heavenly vision? Jesus, whose followers he was persecuting, appears to him and tells him: "I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you. I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, to open

their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in me" (Acts 26:16-18).

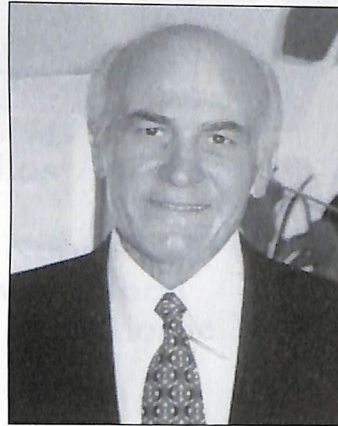
What Paul is told in that heavenly vision is a perfect summary of what Jesus does and wants to do to every man, woman and child in the world:

- Jesus opens their eyes to awareness of their sins and miserable condition;
- He enables them to turn from the darkness of their sinful state and the meaninglessness of their lives to God's blessed presence in their lives; by so doing,
- He saves them from the dominance of Satan, and He empowers them to live holy, constructive and victorious lives; and,
- He forgives their sins; and finally,
- He inducts them into the communion of the saints and the blessed fellowship of those who are saved by faith in Him.

This is the heavenly vision! This is God's vision, His salvation plan for all mankind — every human being in the world saved and incorporated into the body of Jesus Christ! What a glorious vision!

The contrast of this heavenly vision with the reality of the world underscores the miserable condition of mankind. Human sin has alienated people from God, from one another and from everything in God's creation. People live and act without any sense of accountability. They often prefer expediency over morality; deception over truth; personal profit over justice; violence over peace; greed over generosity; indifference over compassion; hatred over love.

Then, too, the contrast of Paul's heavenly vision with the miserable condition of mankind highlights the urgency of the central mission of the church of Jesus Christ. God has called the church and commissioned it to work primarily for the fulfillment of His



heavenly vision for the world. The church is sent into the world to serve as an extension of Jesus Christ's preaching, teaching, forgiving, reconciling, liberating and healing ministry; — "...to preach the gospel to the poor; to heal the brokenhearted; to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind; to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord"

(Luke 4:18-19); "...to seek and to save what was lost" (Luke 19:10); "...not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). The church is given the commission to "make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19). This is the mission of the church through which God plans to end the misery of mankind.

But the problem of many Christians and churches is not their lack of awareness of their mission. The problem of most Christians and churches is their lack of obedience to their heavenly calling.

Paul was not disobedient to his heavenly vision. That is why he became a blessed person and brought blessings into the lives of others, generation after generation, century after century, throughout the world.

In his testimony, Paul also reveals the way he showed his obedience to the heavenly vision. He states, "I declared first to those at Damascus, then at Jerusalem and throughout the country of Judea, and also to the gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God and perform deeds worthy of their repentance" (Acts 26:20).

In his book "Our Guilty Silence", J. R. W. Stott suggests, "Either we have no compelling incentive even to try to speak, or we do not know what to say." Paul knew what to say, and what he said is a simple and clear summary of the gospel message every Christian and every church ought to proclaim:

When a Friend is a Friend

By Carnegie S. Calian

When is a friend a friend? And, how many friends do we think we really have? Most of us have discovered by now through the school of experience that there are "fair weather friends" and then there are true friends.

Some of us use the term "friend" rather loosely; we tend to confuse friendship with acquaintanceship. Many strangers to our shores as well as recent immigrants have commented that we Americans have an underdeveloped understanding of friendship. We are too quick to call someone a friend; for non-Americans this is amusing. I suspect we would all admit that authentic friendship normally requires time; we process a relationship through a period of mutual self-discovery.

We Americans, however, often desire instant friendship. We tend to call most persons we meet "friends" after an initial meeting or conversation, but upon further reflection we know in our psyche that this is not necessarily so.

When then is a friend a friend? Could we say that the story of our lives is traced through the tale of friendships made and broken? Who is and who isn't our friend is evident by actions and behavior. We must never lose sight of the fact that friendships are always fragile.

How can we distinguish genuine friendship among our countless relationships? The

biblical passage of John 15:12-17 offers us guidelines to test the nature of true friendship.

In speaking to his disciples, Jesus uses the word "friends" three times in John 15. The first use highlights the ultimate test of friendship; verse 13 reads, "greater love has no one than this, then that someone lays down one's life for their friends." I suspect most of us don't know if we could measure up to this particular criterion.

Nevertheless, many of us can testify to this loving quality of sacrifice as witnessed in a father's or mother's love for their children, the grandparents' devotion to grandchildren, or when a brother, sister or other kin has literally given his or her life to provide us with a more fulfilled life. We have seen such acts of sacrificial friendship in times of crises—floods, earthquakes and in personal times of deep grief. Some of these acts of sacrificial friendship are experienced in receiving a transplanted organ that gives life and hope; oftentimes the organ donors are unknown friends whose last act of generosity sustains us now.

Others have experienced sacrificial acts of friendship in times of war. In the recent



film, "Saving Private Ryan," there is an opening scene where an elderly man (Ryan) visits with great emotion the graveside of the lieutenant who gave his life in battle so that Private Ryan could be saved. The first and foremost level of friendship involves then sacrificial love — it points to deeds performed rather than rhetoric and promises. The story of the Good Samaritan is the story of true

friendship exercised unexpectedly and graciously by a stranger who is actually a friend in disguise sent from God.

Perhaps Jimmy Stewart the actor summed it up best in his book, *It's a Wonderful Life*, when he said, "remember, no one is a failure who has friends." That means friends who are willing to express their relationship in loving deeds and not simply in words. The crucifixion of Jesus on the cross also points us to the reality that genuine human interaction involves sacrifices. To what extent are we willing to trade our life for a friend is the ultimate test of friendship, according to Jesus. From this standpoint, how many friends do you think you really have? I suspect that most of us have avoided this question.

Being Obedient (Cont'd from page 2)

- Repent and turn from your sinful ways;
- Come to God by accepting Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior; and
- Live a life, and perform the kind of deeds that will show you are a Christian.

This is the message Paul preached in obedience to the heavenly vision; and this is the message we ought to proclaim as individual Christians and churches in obedience to our heavenly vision. Repent! Turn to God! Perform deeds that demonstrate your repentance!

The sad fact is that most ministers and churches say and do many things in the name

of their mission and vision, but neither their words nor deeds show any meaningful articulation of the gospel of Jesus Christ. They preach, and they organize all sorts of activities, but their preaching and their activities are void of the gospel message of salvation through Jesus Christ. And that is the reason why they are not blessed, nor do they become a blessing to others.

The word of God states, "where there is no vision the people perish" (Proverbs 29:18). Do we have any vision for our families, churches and nation?

Fortunately we do not need to reinvent the

wheel. The vision — the heavenly vision that came to Paul — has been offered also to us and our churches as a heavenly mission and a divine promise: the gospel of salvation and forgiveness of sin preached to every human being; "...this gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations" (Matthew 24:14). All we need to do is accept it as our vision and mission, obey it, and pursue it with the sure knowledge that its achievement will bring good to ourselves, will bless other people and will glorify our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. □

The second criterion for friendship according to Jesus involves respect and willingness to follow our friends' wishes. "You are my friends," says Jesus in verse 14, "if you do what I command." Implicit in friendship is followership that is willing to listen. This is not always easy to accomplish as the disciples of Jesus discovered.

The building of friendship according to Jesus is a matter of caring and critical listening. Jesus was indicating to his disciples and to us that the command to listen is imperative, if we are to build healthy relationships that enable genuine friendships to flourish.

In our fast paced lives, we take too little time to listen to one another. How then do we have time to become a congregation of friends? We seem to have "answers" before we have heard the question. We rush in to offer solutions to a friend, when what is needed might be a listening ear. Why do you think talk shows on radio and television have expanded in recent years? It reflects the public's need to have someone listen. In today's professionalized society we have paid "friends" to listen to our concerns. Friendship initially operates on practicing acceptance—not attempting to change or improve the other person as the first order of business. Friendship provides the freedom to disagree without exerting pressure on the other to conform. Ours is indeed a lonely society in search of listeners, who will take time to hear us in a loving and caring way.

The third criterion for friendship according to Jesus involves sharing ourselves, overcoming the tendency to cover up our weaknesses and faults. It takes guts to share our vulnerability, to let our secrets and failed ambitions be known. Jesus said to his disciples in verse 15, "I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead I have called you friends, for everything I have learned from my Father I have made known to you." Sharing one's self places trust in the friend.

Some years ago in a workshop with business and professional leaders in which I participated, the seminar leader asked those of us attending to write down our goals and ambitions for the next five years. Since the workshop had already been meeting for some days, he suggested that the participants turn to someone they regarded as a friend and share their hopes for the future. One

workshop member was overhead whispering to his neighbor, "Hell", he said, I don't have any friends; that's why I'm successful." In the atmosphere of such a society, only counterfeit relationships will emerge. Genuine friendships become truly a luxury that no one can afford. Have we become a society in which friendship is unaffordable? Perhaps the true state of bankruptcy is discovering that you haven't any friends, that no one truly cares for you regardless of your financial worth or status. Is the building of true friendship indeed incompatible with achieving success in today's market-driven society?

It is said, we have become a culture of distrust. In practice, we tend to share, if at all, in a very selective or secretive manner. We never tell any one friend everything, but only small bits and pieces of ourselves. This often makes us appear inconsistent and contradictory, apparently the price we are willing to pay in a distrusting society. This basic mistrust is endemic to the building up of lasting and deepening relationships where we can really become friends to one another. To say that we are a society in search of listeners, is to say that we have become a society lacking trusting relationships. Fulfillment in life, I submit, is not found in chasing dollars or seeking status, but in the building of healthy, trusting relationships that can become friendships.

Perhaps we have created today an invisible poverty for ourselves; no time for authentic friendships. The absence of human friendships makes a difference in the qual-

ity of our lives. Our depression and loneliness are to a large extent our own fault as we reflect on our style of living together as a society.

Finally, let it be said that there are no perfect friendships, just as there are no perfect relatives. On both the human and Divine levels we are constantly in need of forgiveness in our relationships. There can be no lasting friendship without the practice of forgiveness. Friendship means learning to trust, listen, accept, and forgive one another. Love without forgiveness is a forgery. And forgeries are an affront to God and to us; anything less than genuine friendship based on forgiving and loving acceptance will not satisfy our emotional needs.

The biblical teaching is clear—true friendships depend on trusting relationships. Having a friend is indeed a priceless treasure. There is no price tag on true friendship; the wealth of a person is measured by friends, not by dollars. Having genuine friends is the truest measurement of our status in life. Becoming a congregation of friends should be the ideal goal of every believing community.

As we look to Jesus, we have the model of a true friend, who in turn invites us to be His friend.

May God grant us the courage likewise to reach out and take the necessary risk to build true friendships among neighbors, colleagues, classmates and strangers. And in the process discover friends among those who are also searching like us. Amen. □

AMAA JAMES G. JAMESON ESSAY CONTEST OPEN TO HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE STUDENTS

The Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) has announced it will once again sponsor the James G. Jameson Essay Contest. Topics should touch upon some aspect of Armenian heritage such as religion, literature, language, history, culture, geography, economy or history.

Awards will be made in two categories: High School contestants and College/University contestants. The deadline for entries is July 31, 2000.

All Armenian or part-Armenian students are eligible. Only unpublished entries will be accepted. The winner in each category will be awarded \$250.00, provided from the income of a special fund established by Mr. James G. Jameson of Brookline, MA.

The essays should be written in English and have a length of 1,000 to 2,000 words. A contestant is allowed no more than one entry per year, and no more than one member of a family may receive an award in a five-year period. If no submitted essay is considered sufficiently meritorious, no award will be granted that year.

Entries and/or inquiries should be directed to:

AMAA - James G. Jameson Essay Contest
31 West Century Road, Paramus, NJ 07652

A Visit to the Mission Field in Lebanon and Armenia

Last April, a two-week mission field trip by Rev. Movses B. Janbazian, the Executive Director of the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) took him to Lebanon and Armenia. On this trip, Rev. Janbazian was accompanied by Mr. Hagop Loussarian, the Executive Director of the Armenian Evangelical Social Service Center of Los Angeles. Mr. Loussarian serves as the capable volunteer visiting principal of the AMAA's Khoren and Soushanig Avedisian Primary School in Yerevan.

LEBANON

In Lebanon, Rev. Janbazian attended a meeting of the Board of Trustees of Haigazian University, and spent a week reviewing the progress and problems faced by the local AMAA-supported programs and organizations. His meetings with the leaders of these organizations were productive in terms of identifying problem areas and discussing practical solutions. The following summary is extracted from Rev. Janbazian's report to the AMAA Board of Directors:

Enrollment at Haigazian University for the second semester of the current school year dropped 5.5% to 430. Slightly over half (52%) of the students are Armenian. The AMAA's support includes \$182,000 in scholarship aid to 177 students; while substantial, this aid falls far short of the actual need. The firm of Arthur Anderson has been retained to audit the university's accounts. The faculty consists of 21 full-time and 37 part-time instructors.

The inadequacies of the Union's accounting system of the Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East, is being addressed by retaining Ernst and Young to both audit the Union's books and to set up a uniform accounting system to be followed by all of the Armenian Evangelical schools affiliated with the Union. Improvements during the past year are encouraging.

Organizational problems are being addressed, too. The relationships and responsibilities among the organizations within the Union are being clarified.



Participants in the Haigazian University Board of Trustees meeting, flanked by Chairman of the Board, Mr. Herair Mouradian (1st left), and President Rev. Dr. John Khanjian (1st right); Trustees, the President, the Deans and officers of the Alumni Association of Haigazian University posing for a picture with Mr. Salim Diab (2nd row, 3rd from left), after a reception in their honor at Diab family's mension in West Beirut. Mr. Diab, who is a former student of Haigazian University, is a member of the Lebanese Parliament and a close friend of the Armenian community in Lebanon.

This Council is directly responsible for the Armenian Evangelical schools in Lebanon. It is evident that the schools have huge financial problems. The salaries of the teachers of some schools are in arrears, and much of the maintenance work needed by the schools is being postponed.



Dr. Levon Zenian, and Mr. & Mrs. Hagop Atamian of Latakia, Syria.

pointed out that a large part of the Armenian community had left the country during the prolonged civil war, and few had since returned. The permanent departees were primarily the well-to-do, including those with leadership, administrative and technical skills. The remaining Armenians, left to face unemployment and inflation, are less well-off than formerly and many cannot afford to send their children to Armenian or private schools. The AMAA's Child Sponsorship Program for the Middle East alleviates this problem but cannot solve it entirely.



Mr. David Whisker of France-based Service d'Enteraid et de Liaison (1st row, 3rd from left) with the AMAA's staff in Armenia.

ARMENIA

Another problem is declining school enrollment. During the past five years, enrollment has dropped by one-third. One of the reasons for the declining school enrollment is parents' inability to pay the tuition of their children. The Armenian schools which are losing an increasing number of students to public schools which do not charge any tuition.

Rev. Janbazian

While in Lebanon, Rev. Janbazian made a one-day trip to Latakia, Syria, to meet with some of the AMAA friends in the area, and brief them on the Association's ministries in Armenia.

ARMENIA

In Armenia, Rev. Janbazian's schedule was packed with a range of activities. These included: preaching engagements with local congregations and church groups; conferences with Rev. René Léonian and Mr. Harout Nercessian (AMAA representatives in Armenia), and other members of the local staff; consultations with the pastors and lay leaders of the local Armenian Evangelical churches; and meetings with the administrators and students of the Evangelical Theological Seminary of Armenia, the Board of Managers of the Khoren and Shoushanig Avedisian Primary School, and the leaders of the local pentecostal, Apostolic Brotherhood, Baptist and Evangelical churches. Rev. Janbazian also met a number of government and religious leaders, such as Robert Kocharian (president of the Republic of Armenia); Arkadi Ghougasian (President of Nagorno Karabagh); Armen Khachadourian (speaker of the National Assembly); His Holiness Karekin I (Catholicos of all Armenians); Michel Legras (the French Ambassador to Armenia). Rev. Janbazian's activities also included meetings with mission partners, such as, Sister Hanna Christenn of Hilfsbund Mission; Robert Dira (local representative of World Vision); David Whisker (Executive Director of Service d'Enteraid et de Liaison); Guevork Mouradian (Director of Noubarashen Orphanage); Vahan Der Ghevontian (Director of Hayasdan All-Armenia Fund); Yuri Sarkissian (Rector of State Engineering University of Armenia); Rev. Yuri Avanesian (President of the Armenian Evangelical Union of Armenia); and Deacon Hratch Sarkissian (Director of the Bible Society of Armenia).

The purpose of these meetings and conference was to review the AMAA's local mission and service projects; to discuss the status and needs of the Armenian Evangelical Churches; to explore ways of enhancing the effectiveness of AMAA's programs and the witness of the local Evangelical communities; address current and anticipated problems related to the Association's work; and assess the current needs of the local people.

Rev. Janbazian returned from Ar-



menia in a somber mood. His report to the AMAA Board of Directors painted a bleak picture of current conditions in Armenia. Maintaining a large army to counteract future aggression by Azerbaijan is siphoning off Armenia's limited resources to necessary but essentially non-productive uses. Political uncertainty, fostered by factionalism, is having an adverse effect on many of the government's functions.

There is severe poverty as the result of the deteriorated economy, the rampant unemployment, low wages, and disruption of social programs and services. Poverty which is affecting an estimated 80% of the population, is taking its toll on family cohesion and is weakening the social fabric. Many families are breaking up as husbands leave Armenia to seek work elsewhere or simply give up. Many people are suffering, especially the elderly. Their modest pensions, undermined by government's inability to pay them regularly and by years of inflation, are utterly inadequate.

Schools are deteriorating in the absence of funds for maintenance and supplies. Orphanages and nurseries, with inadequate and irregular government subsidies, are also suffering. Many children are dropping out of school. Delinquent children and teenagers - street peddlers, beggars and worse - are seen in all cities and towns.

Many people cannot afford medical services or medications. Illnesses often go untreated until the symptoms become life-threatening, and treatment becomes more difficult, expensive and unaffordable.

Universities are worried about declining enrollments. Fewer children are completing high school; emigration is cutting down the pool of students; families are having fewer children; and children traumatized by the 1988 earthquake are bringing with them into their schools their emotional and psychological problems.

People are emigrating from Armenia in alarming numbers. More than 1,300,000 have left Armenia during the past 10 years. The main reason for emigration is the poor social and economic conditions in the country, and lack of future prospects and hope. Unemployment is cited as a key reason for emigration. More than 35% of the population is unemployed. If the current wave of emigration

Some of those with whom Rev. Janbazian visited in Armenia: (clockwise) President Robert Kocharian; Mr. Harout Nercessian, AMAA Deputy Representative in Armenia with World Vision representatives; David Whisker, Executive Director of Service d'Enteraid et de Liaison of France; Hon. Michel Legras, Ambassador of France to Armenia, and Mr. Armen Léonian, Commercial Attaché of the French Embassy; and leaders of the English language Sunday worship services held at the AMAA Center in Yerevan.



AMAA Lecture Series Ends

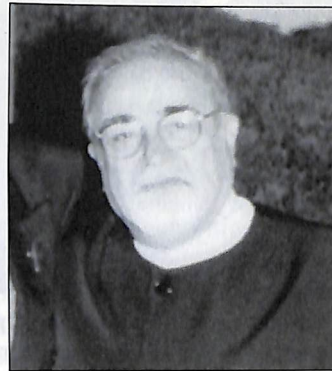
The Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) inaugurated a series of lectures by prominent Armenian scholars as a contribution to the cultural awareness of Armenians as we approach the 1700th anniversary of the adoption of Christianity as the state religion of Armenia. The lectures were held at the AMAA's headquarters in Paramus, NJ, and were well-attended. The last two lecturers of the series were Dr. Gevork Kherlopian and Rev. Dr. Manuel Jinbachian, who spoke on April 29 and May 12, respectively.

Dr. Kherlopian is a widely-respected scholar among Armenians in both the homeland and the Diaspora. He has served as a professor at Yerevan University, Haigazian College in Lebanon, Wayne State University in Michigan and several other educational institutions. His subject, "Early Chris-

tianity in Armenia", was one he knew well, as his doctoral theses years earlier also dealt with the origin and growth of Christianity in Armenia.

Rev. Dr. Jinbachian is an Armenian Evangelical pastor who has served congregations in

Syria and Egypt. He later joined the faculty of Haigazian University, where he served for 10 years. Since 1979 he has been with the United Bible Society, where he has served as a Translation Consultant and is now the Society's Middle East Translations Coordinator. His aptitude for languages – he has mastered some 17 – and his knowledge of the Bible are formidable. Rev. Dr. Jinbachian's subject, "Translating the Bible



Rev. Dr. Manuel Jinbachian. Prof. Gevork Kherlopian

into Armenian Over the Centuries," was delivered with authority. He pointed out that translating the Bible requires a knowledge of Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek and Latin, as well as the host language. He also cautioned against literal translations, which lose meaning and context. As languages change over time, he said, new translations are needed to convey the Bible's meaning to new generations. □

Visit to Mission Field (Cont'd from page 7)

is not checked, it will certainly have irrevocable effects on Armenia which is the only tiny piece of land remaining to Armenians out of the boundless universe created by God.

Rev. Janbazian concluded his report in the following words:

"The AMAA has a competent and faithful staff in Armenia, and

the Association's orphan sponsorship, child care, infant formula, dental and medical care, and relief programs are making a difference in thousands of lives. However, the current needs and problems of our people are overwhelming with no imminent solution in sight. In fact, the current needs of the people of Armenia are more

acute and urgent than those seen in the wake of the disastrous earthquake of 1988. Poverty has pushed many people to the brink of survival. People, especially the children and the elderly, need help and hope, and they need it now! Helping them begins by helping one child, one elderly person, one family, one orphanage or one school at a time. We have to double our efforts to increase the number of sponsored orphans and child care programs. Moreover, we have to initiate a sponsorship program for needy families. Each Armenian family in the Diaspora can and should sponsor an impoverished family in Armenia. If we all join hands and work together, under God's blessings, we can make a difference! We will be unable to meet all the needs of all needy people, but we can touch and uplift the lives of some, and these are the people for whom we accountable to God." □

Yes, I would like to help impoverished people in Armenia.

— I am enclosing a gift of \$_____ for a needy: ☐ family ☐ orphan ☐ elderly person ☐ school ☐ orphanage.

— I am enclosing a donation of \$_____, and would like to become a sponsor of a needy: ☐ child(ren) ☐ family(ies) at \$240 per child/family per year.

Name _____ Tel. _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Make your tax-deductible check payable to AMAA, and mail to: 31 West Century Rd., Paramus, NJ 07652

Evangelistic Ministry to the Middle East

by John A. Zarifian

Editor's Note: Rev. John A. Zarifian, a retired Armenian Evangelical pastor now settled in Montreal, Canada, does not seem to consider retirement as an opportunity to gracefully withdraw from ministerial duties. Instead, he looks upon retirement as an opportunity to devote himself to helping revive the evangelical spirit within the Armenian Evangelical Church.

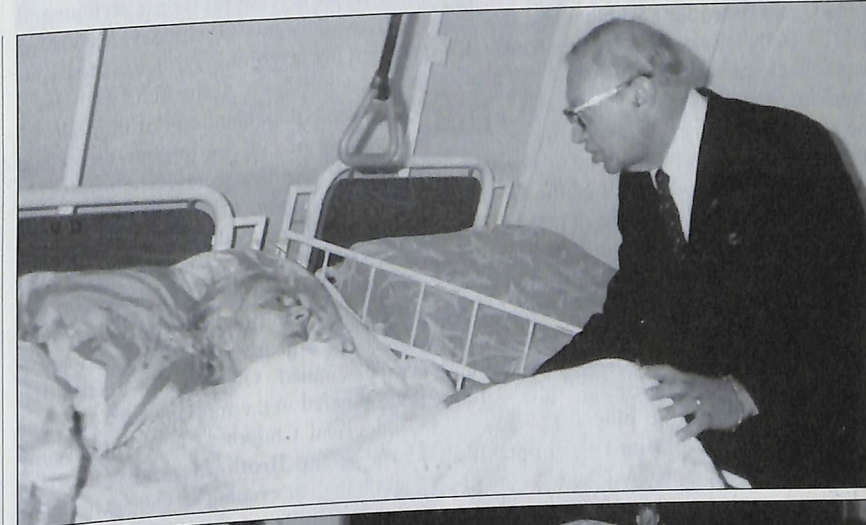
During the past year, he has been sponsored by the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) as an "itinerant evangelist". In this capacity he has visited many churches in the U.S. and overseas.

He recently submitted to the AMAA a report on his latest mission, a three-month visit to the Armenian Evangelical churches in Syria, Lebanon, Turkey and Greece. The following excerpts are from his report:

The vision of the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) is to reach out to our Armenian communities with the message of the Gospel, and to help bring about a spiritual awakening much needed in these days throughout our dispersed nation.

At the turn of the century, faced with the coming 1700th anniversary (in 2001) of the adoption of Christianity as the state religion of Armenia, the AMAA has seen the need for a religious revival as the best means for us to return to the Faith of our Fathers. We must all join in prayer before the throne of God and ask Him to grace us once more with a new visitation of the Holy Spirit. This must happen if we are to witness the awakening – or re-awakening – of our Christian hearts and minds in our churches in the coming years.

The first phase of our mission was in Syria. We arrived in Aleppo on January 22, 2000. Aleppo is familiar to us. We had served as an itinerant evangelist for the Middle East from 1977 to early 1980, before we moved to Providence, RI, where we pastored the Armenian Euphrates Evangelical Church for 18 years. The timing of our arrival was surely in God's planning. The next day I began to preach and continued to



Rev. Zarifian with one of the residents of the Armenian Old Age Home in Bourdj Hammoud, Lebanon (above); and with some of the members of the two Armenian Evangelical Churches of Istanbul (below).

do so every day except Saturdays, responding to the call of our pastors and church-related groups. In fact, this trend continued until the day we returned home on April 11. The necessity for such a visitation was already felt by the pastors of Syria who were praying and working together in the expectation and hope for a religious revival in the churches of Aleppo, Kessab, Homs and Damascus. Today, some 70,000 Armenians still live in this hospitable land of Syria. Each community has founded its churches

and adjacent schools to give a national flavor to their mother tongue and their cultural identity.

In Aleppo, the churches play an influential religious and cultural role, as do their schools. Two other churches are also part of the Union. One is the Syriac Evangelical Church, together with its school, which is established in the Assyrian Quarter of Aleppo. The other is the Church of Christ, which is affiliated with the "Action Chrétienne en Orient" based in Strasbourg,

France. This is a mission church which combines both social and medical organizations that minister to the people's needs, particularly to children needing medical care.

In the second week of our stay in Aleppo, the pastors collaborated in a Joint Revival Service that lasted for a whole week. It was held at Bethel Evangelical Church, which was filled to capacity every evening. Those attending were not all "evangelicals". At the close of the week, however, the results of the meetings were thrilling to observe. Many responded to the call of the Gospel and came forward for a word of prayer. We were also inspired by the participation of a well-known brother from Tehran, Iran, especially invited for the occasion, Pastor Vrouyr Avedisian, a singer of spirit who composes his own spiritual songs. He was assisted by Brother Roupig, one of his church members, who played the guitar; Mrs. Shoghag (Aparian) Selimian, the pastor's wife, accompanied them on the piano/organ with two other local musicians. Together, they all played their instruments with vigor, to the enjoyment of the young people. They were truly blessed! Surely God's Word shall not return to Him empty, but it shall prosper in the thing for which He sent it (Isaiah 55:11).

Besides these regular weekly meetings in the churches, joint services were also held separately with ladies' groups, young people's groups, board members and leaders, communicant members, etc., who joined together around the Word of God to share their concerns about the work and the means to carry on in a more effective way.

On the last day, a pastor's retreat was held which included all the active pastors of Syria. The next day, we left Aleppo and came to Kessab for a week. Joint services were held in each of the churches. The Church of Kessab is a large building that is suitable for such events. Two other churches have been renovated in the same region, that of Keorkuneh and Ekiz Olouk and a third one in Kaladouran, smaller in size, since many have left this region in the last several years. In Kessab, two pastors are serving these churches.

Finally we came to Damascus, where some 5000 Armenians live. We found attendance at the Armenian Evangelical Church to be poor. Its pastor has served the church for the last 25 years. After two ser-

vices on Sunday, followed by nightly meetings for almost a week, we left Damascus and came to Anjar, in Lebanon. It was "Vartanantz Day," Thursday, March 2. We stayed for two days, during which I preached twice before leaving for Beirut, an hour and a half away by car. On Sunday, March 5, I took part in the morning service of the Evangelical Church in Ashrafieh, with Rev. Soghomon Kilaghbian, one of the four active pastors of our Beirut churches. I had many opportunities to meet with my colleagues in the ministry. These pastors are burdened with many difficult tasks, in addition to their regular pastoral work. I was invited to conduct an evangelistic service, followed by a spiritual retreat for the young people on a nearby hill, where some 55 people attended. On the following Sunday, I participated in the morning service of the Evangelical Church of Nor Marash and again at the Brotherhood Evangelical Church in their evening service. After three more days in Beirut preaching to two of our ladies' groups, and evening prayer services in Nor Amanos and Nor Marash Evangelical Churches, we came to Istanbul, Turkey, on March 16.

We lived in Istanbul for two weeks with the pastor of the Armenian Evangelical Church of Gedik Pasha, Mr. Krikor Agabaloglu, his wife, Maria, and their two children. Pastor Krikor is doing a most sacrificial work in renovating the church, which is much in need of serious repairs. Since he became pastor, the sanctuary has been filled to capacity on Sundays. He is also occupied in a radio ministry every Friday morning, and teaches the Bible in Turkish. The manager of the station is Mr. Mustapha Elf, a Muslim who, after reading the Bible, has come to accept Jesus Christ as his personal Savior, and now serves the Lord through this radio ministry together with his family. I was given the opportunity to deliver a few sermons in Armenian on this station, and to share my faith.

Another Armenian church, which may be called the "Mother Church" of all Armenian Evangelicals, is "The Holy Trinity" Church. A Christian gentleman, Mr. Hovhannes Torkomoglu, is its president who, with his wife Sona drives people to the services on Sundays. They are both very hospitable and serve God wholeheartedly. In both churches, the language is Turkish, except for a few

hymns that are sung in Armenian. The Holy Trinity Church is hosting some 80-100 Christian Turks who join in worship on Sunday afternoons at 1. Many of them are young people, and this church is known as the "Turk Protestant Kilisse" (Turkish Protestant Church). The pastor, Mr. Reza, is a young Turk who serves the Lord. I preached to his congregation on two occasions and participated in the Holy Communion with them.

In Istanbul, one of the thrilling experiences I had was to preach to some Christian ladies' groups at several prayer meetings in private homes. These women are filled with the Holy Spirit, and they win many others to Christ. Each time, more than 70-75 people attended, some of whom are Turkish women who have turned to Christ.

After such a rewarding time with the Christians of Istanbul, we came to Athens, Greece, on Thursday, March 30. We were greeted by Rev. Vicken Cholakian, pastor of the Armenian Evangelical Churches of Athens, and Dr. Hovig Demirjian, the son of the late Rev. Krikor Demirjian. Rev. Cholakian, who is loved by all his congregation, is serving two churches in Athens, one in Kokkinia and the other in Derghouty. These two churches have about 90-100 people in all. The sanctuary in Kokkinia needs repairing after an earthquake damaged the building last year, while the other building in Derghouty has been torn down and needs rebuilding. In the meantime, the congregation here is worshipping in a nearby Grace (Greek) Evangelical Church. Here in Athens nightly Evangelistic services were held for both churches from Sunday, April 2 to Sunday, April 9. Midweek meetings took place with both churches' ladies' groups and also the young people. Before our departure, on our last night, Rev. Cholakian and the board members had organized a dinner fellowship which we enjoyed in a warm and friendly atmosphere. After almost three months of intensive travel and preaching, we returned home tired, yes, but rejoicing in the Lord for a most rewarding time. I thank God for having kept us safe during all this ministry. And I am also grateful to the AMAA for giving me and my wife Lois such a great privilege to go forth and share the Gospel with our people in the churches in Syria, Lebanon, Turkey and Greece."□

The Armenian Evangelical Social Service Center in Los Angeles

Twenty-three years ago, the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) became aware that large numbers of Armenian immigrants – primarily from the Middle East, where the protracted civil war in Lebanon was disrupting normal lives – were entering the United States and settling, for the most part, in southern California. This awareness turned to action, as the AMAA was instrumental in establishing in Los Angeles the Armenian Evangelical Social Service Center (AESSC). The purpose of the center was – and continues to be – helping immigrant Armenians adapt to their new lives in the United States. The Center operates out of its spacious offices at 5250 Santa Monica Blvd., in Los Angeles, and also maintains a branch office in Glendale.

Some years later, an even larger influx of Armenian immigrants – primarily from Armenia itself – began settling in southern California. This group, which had lived their entire lives in a rigid, state-controlled society, found it much harder to adapt to life in the United States. Fortunately, the AESSC was already in place and available to this new wave of immigrants. The Center had to expand its activities and add new functions. The reputation of the Center persuaded the County of Los Angeles to provide substantial financial support for several of its programs.

The Center has a full-time staff of 15, including the Executive Director, Mr. Hagop Loussarian, whose capable leadership has been the driving force behind the progress of the Center's services. The major activities of the Center include: general social work; information and referrals; job training and placement; Certified Nurse's Aid training; Refugee employment; Immigration and Naturalization help; Prison visits (there are currently about 5,000 Armenians – mostly young men – in California prisons).

The Center also provides fingerprinting, passport photo and notary public services. Clients are asked to donate \$2 to the Center, if they can afford to do so. The money thus collected is given to the AMAA for its Orphan/Child Care programs in Armenia and Karabagh.



Armenian Evangelical Social Service Center staff. Standing front row, center, is Mr. Hagop Loussarian, the Executive Director of the Center.

The Armenian Evangelical Social Service Center, which serves all Armenians who seek its help without reference to religious or po-

litical preferences, has a distinguished Board of Directors and an enviable reputation in the Armenian community of southern California.□

Social Service Center in Lebanon

Recently, the Armenian Evangelical Social Service Center in Beirut submitted its annual report to the Board of Directors of the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA). The AMAA's Executive Director, Rev. Movses Janbazian, was instrumental in establishing the Center many years ago when he was a young pastor in Lebanon. The current Director is Arpi Kardashian, a Haigazian University graduate of Beirut.

The Center has a supervised playground for young children, who learn about the Bible and participate in games, handicrafts and field trips.

A Study Room, also supervised, offers children a quiet place to study, an opportunity they may not have at home. Studying is encouraged by giving small gifts to the children who improve their school grades.

Family Assistance, in the form of monthly allowances to needy families, continues to be the major focus of the Center. In many cases, unemployment and inflation put a severe strain on family relationships, which the Center's social workers try to address. Some services are also provided for the elderly, many of whom are house-bound, and the sick, whose problems are compounded by the lack of money for preventive testing and treatment.

Finally, the Center provides monetary aid to the poor families in Armenian communities in Syria. This aid is distributed through the Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches in Syria.

The primary financial support for the Social Service Center comes from the AMAA, which recognizes the important work it does among poor Armenian families in Beirut.□

AMAA's "Young Virtuosos" of Armenia Perform in Lebanon and Syria



The AMAA's "Young Virtuosos" performing at Haigazian University of Beirut, Lebanon.

Among the cultural and educational projects of the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) in Armenia is a "Young Virtuosos" program. This program identifies and selects children with exceptional musical talent and provides them with the support and encouragement needed to pursue their respective talents. The children, ages 9 to 14, attend special music-oriented schools in Yerevan.

Last February, the Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East invited a group of these talented youngsters to give performances in Lebanon and Syria. The group toured Aleppo, Kessab, Anjar and Beirut and gave highly appreciated performances.

The proceeds from the performances of the "Young Virtuosos" will be spent on orphanages and child care programs in Armenia and Karabagh. □

AMAA Month Observed in Armenia

Each year, Armenian Evangelical churches everywhere select a Sunday in March to recognize and express their support for the work of the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) in Armenian communities throughout the world. On those days, congregations learn about the AMAA's programs and their impact on the lives of the poor and the less privileged. Congregations also have the opportunity to contribute to these programs through special collections on these occasions.

This year, the Armenian Evangelical churches of Armenia and Georgia as well as the Evangelical Theological Seminary of Armenia, reported on their participation in "AMAA Month". The participants represented eleven churches in Armenia and one in Georgia, as well as the seminary students.

The designated gifts on this occasion were modest by American standards. For a country suffering from endemic poverty and unemployment, however, the result was significant and substantial, reminding us of the parable of the "widow's mite." □

Women's World Day of Prayer in Los Angeles, CA

Ann Karagozian Sarafian, Ph. D., and Elizabeth Agbabian, daughter of Mrs. Aznive Apkarian, the event's founder, offered the English and Armenian messages, respectively, at the Women's World Day of Prayer Service on March 3, 2000. The 30th anniversary event, hosted by the United Armenian Congregational Church of Hollywood, CA, was chaired by Hourii Melkonian, and was attended by the Armenian Evangelical, Apostolic and Catholic women of the greater Los Angeles area.

Both, Dr. Sarafian and Mrs. Agbajian expounded on the theme selected this year by the Christian women of Indonesia, living in a predominantly Islamic country. It was *Talitha Kumi* (Stand Up Little Girl), taken from the words of Jesus to the deceased daughter of Jairus as found in the Gospel of Mark.

Mrs. Agbabian's message in the Armenian language appears on page 13 of this issue of the AMAA NEWS. □

85th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide Commemorated in Boston



Rev. Samuel Agulian, Rev. Mihran Kupeyan and Dr. Gevork Kherlopian at the foot of the Khachkar Monument.

The Armenian Evangelical community of Boston marked the 85th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide with a special commemorative service on Sunday, April 30, 2000 at the First Armenian Church in Belmont, MA. The program of the evening represented a fitting tribute to the memory of one and one half million Armenians massacred by the Turks between 1915 – 1918. Professor Gevork Kherlopian of Pasadena, CA was the guest speaker. Other speakers included the Rev. Mihran Kupeyan and the Rev. Samuel Agulian. The program also included special music and recitations performed by Vicki Kherlopian, Samuel Maserejian, Dikran and Alec Kherlopian, Levon Hovsepian, and by the joint choirs of the Armenian Memorial and the First Armenian Churches under the direction of June Baboian. The service was concluded with a wreath-laying ceremony at the foot of the Khachkar Monument in the First Armenian Church yard. □

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Էլիզապեթ Աղապապեան

«Մանուկին ձեռքէն բռնելով՝ ըսաւ անոր. "Տալիթա, կումի աղջիկը ոտքի ելաւ ու կը քալէր» (Մարկ 5. 41-42):

Շատ անգամ երբ մտահոգ ենք, եւ կամ հարցեր ունինք,
որոնք մեզ կը վրդովեն, կը ջանանք գտնուիլ լուծել
խօսելով անձի մը հետ որ կարող է օգտակար ըլլալ մեզի:
այդ անձը կրնայ բարեկամ մը ըլլալ, եւ կամ հոգեւոր
հովիւ մը: Ինչպէս որ մեր կարծիքով մեզմէ աւելի փորձառու
է: Ինչպէս որուն կը մօտենանք այն հաստատով որ ինք
կարող է մեզի օգնել:

կարող է մեզի օգնել:
Նոյնն է պարագան Մարկոս Աւետարանի -ըզ գլխուն
մէջ յիշուած Յայրօսին, որուն աղջիկը ծանր հիւանդ էր:
Յայրոս յուսահատած էր, եւ ծանր կասկածներու մէջ: Յիսուսի
մասին ալ կատարեալ տեղեկութիւն չունէր: Լսած էր թէ
հրաշքներ գործող անձ մըն էր ան: Յիսուս ըսաւ իրեն, «Մի
հրաշքներ գործող անձ մըն էր ան: Յիսուս ըսաւ իր
վախնար, միայն թէ հաւատա՛»: Յայրոս հաւատաց. հաւատաց,
որ այս մեծ վարդապետը ուժը ունէր իր աղջիկը
առողջացնելու անոր դպչելով: Յիսուս դպաւ փոքր աղջկան
եւ ան առողջացաւ:

Չենք գիտեր թէ այդ օրուընէ ետք ի սէ Կ
Յայրոսի ու իր աղջկան: Յիսուսի հետեւորդներ եղա՞ն: Իրենք

ալ կրցա՞ն դպչել ուրիշներուն իրենց գլխին: Հազար բառերէ
Հաղորդակցելու լաւագոյն միջոցը դպչիլն է: Հազար վրայ կը դնեմ,
աւելի ազդեցիկ է: Երբ իմ ձեռքս բռն Գրգորեմ մը փոխանցել
կը ջանամ բարեկամութեան տաք գգացումը մը փոխանցելու
քեզի: Զիտար սիրողներ կը դպչին իրարու: Մանուկներու
համար դպչելով:

Յիսուս զգլչելով տկար անձերու, ցոյց տուաւ անոնց իր սէրը: Կոյր եւ խուլ անձերու զպաւ որպէսզի առողջանան: Փոքրիկները գրկեց եւ օրհնեց: Ոմանք իրեն հաւատով զպաւ եւ առողջացան: Եւ քանի որ իր քաղաքով: Իր որդւոյն

Աստուծոմ մեզի կը դպչի՝ տարբեր կերպորով՝ սիրով եւ Յիսուս Բրիտանոսի միջոցաւ մեզի կը դպչի՝ ուրիշներու գուրգուրանով։ Նաեւ Աստուծմ մեզի կը դպչի՝ ուրիշներու կեանքով։ Տրբեմն կը լսենք այս կամ ասոր նման վկայութիւններ։ «Այս անձին օրինակելի կեանքը ինծի

Մեր համայնքին մէջ տիկին մը կայ որ, շատերու կը դպչի իր կարճ խորհրդածուծութիւններով, որոնք կը հրատարակուին Անգլերէն լեզուով շաբաթէ մը մէջ, հրատարակուին Անգլերէն լեզուով Սուրմէեանն է: Թերթին ամէն շաբաթ: Այդ անձը Ասիէն շատեր իրեն կը հեռաձայնեն խմբագիրը ինծի ըսաւ է թէ շատեր իրեն կը կարդալու ըսելու որ ամէն շաբաթ կը սպասեն թերթին, կարդալու Ասիէնին գրութիւնը, քանի անկէ ներշնչոււմ կը ստանան եւ կը յուսադրուին: Ահա անձ մը որ կը դպչի շատերուն իր գրիչով:

Յիսուս դպաւ Յայրոսի աղջկան եւ ան առեւելէ փոխորտութիւն կ'ուզէ մեզ ալ դպչիլի եւ մեր կեանքին մէջ փոփոխութիւն լնել յառաջ բերել։ Ան կ'ուզէ մեզ աւելիի կարեկցող լնել հիւանդներու, տկարներու, աղքատներու եւ սիրուն անձերու։



Իմ մայրս՝ Տիկիրն Ազնիւ
Աբաբարեան, իր կեանքով զպշած
է ինծի: Գիտեմ որ ուրիշներու
ալ զպած է իր քաջալերական
խօսքերով: Իր հեռախօսային
յարաբերութեամբ, իր աղօթք-
ներով եւ իր այցելութիւններով:
Իր կեանքի նպատակը եղած էր
ամէն օր գոնէ մէկ անձի զպչել
եւ Քրիստոսի սէրը ուրիշներու
փոխանցել: Ես շատ բան սորված
եմ իրմէ, թէ իմ մանկու թեանս
ատեն, եւ թէ ալ չափահաս
տարիքիս: Իմ աղօթքս է որ ես
ալ կարենամ իրեն պէս զպչել ուրիշներուն:

Ընկերային ծառայություններում օրերով մը, իր գործակիցներուն պատմեց տղու մը մասին որուն մարմինը վերածուած էր մսակոյտի մը: Այդ տղան զոհ գացած էր ինքնաշարժի արկածի մը եւ քանի որ ամիս ոչ մէկ բժշկական հնամբ ստացած էր:

Թեէն այդ տղան օրիորդիին խնամքին չէր յանձնուած, բայց ան յօժարած էր իր ժամանակէն մաս մը տրամադրել անոր: Ան գտած էր վիրաբոյժ մը որ յօժարած էր անհրաժեշտ խնամքը տանիլ: Երկու տարի ետք ալ զ տղան օրիորդիին գրասենեակը մտած էր առանց իր անթացուպերուն: Ան կատարելապէս ապաքինած էր՝ շնորհիւ վիրաբոյժին բարեկամեցողութեան եւ խնամքին: Երբ օրիորդը կ'ողջագուրուէր տղուն հետ, անոր մտքէն աս' խորհուրդը անցած էր. «Թե՛ք կեանքիս մէջ ուրիշ որեւէ իրազործում չկայ, աստի՛կ աս տղուն որածն բաւարար է ինծի»:

Այս օրիորդը ըստ իր գործակիցներուն. «Այս պատմած դէպքն պատահեցաւ տարիներ առաջ: Ո՞ր կը խորհիք թէ այժմ կ'ապրի այդ տղան»: Անոնք խորհեցան թէ ան կրնար տիպար քաղաքացի մը դարձած ըլլալ. բայց սխալած էին: Օրիորդները ըսաւ. «Ան հիմա բանտի մէջ կը գտնուի՝ որովհետեւ գործեց սարսափելի ոճիր մը: Ես անոր սորվեցուցի ենչախէ քայել, բայց ոչ ոք անոր սորվեցուց ո՛ւր քայել»:

Այս պատմությունը որ առնուած է Հայ Աւետարանական
Ընկերակցութեան կողմէ հրատարակուող «Զհայ Մեր
Հանապազորդ» գրքոյկէն, մեզի ցոյց կուտայ որ միայն
Ֆիզիքական խնամքը բաւարար չէ: Դպչիկ կ'ընդգրկէ նաեւ
հոգեւոր հաղորդակցութիւն: Երբ Յիսուսի սիրով կը գպչինք
ուրիշէն, այն ատեն կը գործադրենք Յիսուսի անկախածը:
Կը փոխանցենք Յիսուսի սէրը:

Թող որ Յիսուսի խօսքը փոքր աղջկան՝ «Տալիթա, կումի»,
մեզ համար պատուէր մը ըլլայ որ մենք ալ դպչինք անոնց,
որոնք պէտք ունին Յիսուսի սիրոյն եւ հոգատարութեան: □

Alice A. Kuljian

Alice A. Kuljian, a resident of the Main Line for nearly 60 years, died on February 10, 2000, at Simpson House in Philadelphia. She was 98. Born in Aintab, a village in southern Turkey, in 1902, she survived harsh conditions as she and thousands of fellow Armenians were driven into the desert during the Turkish genocide against the Armenians.

Reunited with her family in Syria after the Genocide, she immigrated to the U.S. in 1920, where, in 1922, she married Harry Kuljian, who had been the "boy next door" in Aintab. He had moved to the U.S. and graduated from MIT in 1919.

Following the couple's early years in Boston and New York, they settled in the Philadelphia area where Mr. Kuljian founded the Kuljian Corp., an engineering and construction firm.

During the summer of 1937, Mrs. Kuljian took her three children to Egypt, Lebanon and Syria to visit family. Over a four month span, they experienced blinding sandstorms in the Libyan desert, she almost lost one son overboard at sea and another to a vicious attack from a camel. They returned "pale, shaken and pounds lighter from their exotic holiday".

In the early 1940's, Mrs. Kuljian and her family settled in Merion, where she became active in church and charitable affairs. Over the next 40 years, she and her husband traveled the world and she frequently presented lectures on her trips at Bala Cynwyd Methodist Church, where she was a member.

She is remembered as a great storyteller who could mesmerize her audiences with tales of her early life that ranged from humorous to harrowing. She also had a reputation as a gracious and generous hostess.

Mrs. Kuljian moved to Simpson House in 1990.

The widow of Harry A. Kuljian, who died in 1974, Alice is survived by her daughter, Florence Levonian; sons, Arthur and Edward; eight grandchildren; and 13 great-grandchildren.

A memorial service was held on Feb. 18 at the United Methodist Church of Bala Cynwyd.

James Michael Apelian

James Michael Apelian was born in Kessab, Syria, in 1900 to his parents, Michael Apelian and Sera (Halsimian) Apelian. His siblings, all now deceased, were sisters Mary and Effson and brothers George and Joseph.

Having suffered through the massacres,

James followed his father to the United States of America in 1923. He first lived in Boston and then moved to New York. He spoke five languages, and was able to attend Springfield College in Massachusetts, with the hope and dream of becoming a physician. However, due to economic realities, he had to discontinue his studies, but by 1926 he had become an expert photo - engraver.

In 1930, he married Lousine Gasparian, originally from Yasgat, Turkey, and God blessed them with two sons, George and Richard. A hard-working man, James provided well for his family. Beyond his immediate family, James took care of many relatives and friends, helping many to immigrate to the United States, as well as helping them out financially.

His most loving wife died in 1993; and he died on February 27, 2000, at home in the care of his son Richard and Richard's wife, Anne.

He left behind his son, Richard and daughter-in-law Anne; his son, George and daughter-in-law Clover; grandchildren Michael, Georgeanne and Julie and great granddaughter Cassandra, as well as many relatives and friends. He will be greatly missed.

Azad K. Tahmizian

Azad was born October 13, 1920 in Beirut, Lebanon. He went to be with the Lord on March 6, 2000. Azad immigrated to the United States in 1978. He loved his Lord and his family.

Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." John 14:6.

Azad is survived by his wife of 58 years, Makrohy Tahmizian; a son, Boghos Tahmizian; two daughters, Anahid Norendzyan and Sona Yemenjian; four grandchildren and two granddaughters.

Funeral services were held at Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church on Wednesday, March 8, 2000, at 11:30 A.M.

Gifts of remembrance may be made to the Armenian Missionary Association of America Orphan Relief Fund, 31 West Century Rd., Paramus, NJ 07652.

Rose Danielian

Rose Danielian, 93, died on Monday, May 17, 2000, at the Broadway Nursing Home, near Methuen, MA.

She was born and educated in Methuen and graduated from Mount Holyoke College. She also graduated from Boston University in 1928 and received her master's degree from Calvin Coolidge College in 1954. Miss Danielian taught in Methuen schools for 36 years.

Miss Danielian was a member of the National Retirement Association of Teachers, Methuen Women's Club and Lawrence Women's Club.

She attended Bethel Congregational Church, which merged with the Ararat Armenian Congregational Church in 1965. She taught Sunday School, led the Christian Endeavor Youth Group and was active in the Ladies Aid Society.

She was active in community affairs and also volunteered with the Carvel Chapter for the Blind and was a member of the Reading Circle for the Blind.

Miss Danielian was a member of the Methuen Historical Society and served on the committee for the American Bicentennial/250th Anniversary of the Town of Methuen in 1976. She was also a life member of the former Gideon Auxiliary of the Merrimack Valley. She leaves several nieces, nephews and cousins.

A funeral service was held at the Ararat Armenian Congregationa Church and burial followed in Bellevue Cemetery in Lawrence.

Mary Abrahamian

Submitted by Allen Avakian

Mary Abrahamian, our beloved grandmother, joined her Lord on April 4, 2000 in Cherry Hill, NJ. Funeral services were held on Saturday, April 8, 2000 at the Armenian Presbyterian Church of Paramus, NJ.



Mary was the definition of a perfect mother. The reason for and her existence was to care and pray for her children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren. Her hard work, bright and hopeful eyes, easygoing nature, and constant sense of humor made her a shining example to us all.

She was truly one of God's children. It was Mary's faith in God that gave her the incredible strength she needed to survive many difficulties in her life. Every night, no matter what the time or how troublesome the day, Mary read her Bible before she went to sleep, and prayed for each and every person in her family. Each time we spoke to her, she would make sure to tell us how she had prayed for us. She always thought of her children - her late son, John; her daughters Janet and her husband Armand Avakian, and Jean and her husband

Aristo Martin; her grandchildren, Lolita, Monica, Melina, Allen, and Nancy; and even her great grandchildren, Isabelle, Janna, Julia, Christopher and Matthew. Most importantly, her faith made everyone feel that we were all her family in her prayers.

In addition to her faith, Mary had a pleasant nature that made her a friendly person. Without any difficulty, anyone that would sit with her and have a cup of coffee would leave with laughter, a new perspective, and an ability to trust God. Why? Because Mary lived her life to set an example of how to be a good person, even sometimes without saying a word.

Mary began her life in Hamadan, Iran, on August 21, 1913. Her parents were Anna and Samuel Aslanian. Mary's parents sent her to the local Faith Hubbard School, a protestant American missionary school which certainly had a deep spiritual impact on the rest of her life. This is where she also learned to speak English as well as she did - a skill that was rare among her contemporaries in Iran. Throughout her life, she maintained numerous interests, which ranged from music to science to sports. Mary wasn't afraid to experience life. As a result, she had a positive attitude and had a positive impact on all who interacted with her.

Eventually, Mary married her husband Aramais Abrahamian, a man whose faith in God equaled her faith. His strong faith in God played and essential role in raising their family. Even though he was a member of the Armenian Apostolic Church and she was a Presbyterian by affiliation, the type of Christianity they lived and taught to their children went beyond denominational definitions. They always made it clear that it didn't matter which church they attended; the important thing is to be faithful to God and His word. They taught the same thing to their grandchildren.

It was especially with her granddaughter, Nancy, that Mary's spiritual strength and Christian faith led her to teach Nancy everything she knew about God. Mary was like a second mother in helping to raise Nancy. She taught her to pray beside her every night. Whether in her physical presence or in her spiritual presence, Mary was always there for Nancy and for all her loved ones.

It is for this reason that Mary would have wanted us to remember that even without her being here with us in person, she will be with us forever in spirit. If we pay close attention to what she has tried to teach us, we should have no doubt that her sweet smile and her undying faith will be along our side to inspire us with God's love for the rest of our lives.

The AMAA Board of Directors and staff wish to extend their heartfelt condolences to the families of the following deceased friends whose names were submitted to us for publication in the AMAA News:

* Sapsezian, Karnig	Dec. 5, 1999
Chicago, IL	
* Ekizian, Semon	Dec. 8, 1999
W. Nyack, NY	
* Asadourian, Martha	Feb. 4, 2000
Tenafly, NJ	
* Meghrigian, Garabed	March 6, 2000
Los Angeles, CA	
Bond, Harold	March 6, 2000
Melrose, MA	
Avedisian, Ohannes	March 8, 2000
Philadelphia, PA	
* Sevagian, Arthur	March 10, 2000
Fresno, CA	March 27, 2000
* Nazarian, Edmund	March 29, 2000
Proudian, Raffi	
Los Angeles, CA	
* Gulesserian, Angel	March 30, 2000
San Jose, CA	
* Dordigian, Dennis	March 31, 2000
Rowlett, TX	
* Yacoubian, Aharon	April 8, 2000
Beirut, Lebanon	
* Sourenian, Gail	

* Kazarian, Grace	April 8, 2000
Paramus, NJ	
* Eujurian, Bedros	April 20, 2000
Toronto, Canada	
* Hadidian, Beatrice	April 25, 2000
Oakland, CA	
* Asadourian, Zabel	
Woodside, NY	
* Candan, Aghavni	
Little Neck, NY	
* Ekizian, Gladys	
Kingsburg, CA	
* Emerzian, Albert	
Fresno, CA	
* Hekimian, Jerry	
Fresno, CA	
* Meneshian, Hovhannes	
Fresno, CA	
* Palm, Clifford	
Kingsburg, CA	
* Stepanian, Vartouhi	
Bayside, NY	
* Tourian, Rebecca	
San Mateo, CA	
* Davidian, Louisa	
* Magarian, Rose	
* Pape, Irene	

* Memorials were designated for AMAA

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AMAA, 31 West Century Road, Paramus, NJ 07652.



CHRISTMAS IN JULY



It is not too early to think about Christmas specially when you think of the Armenian Christmas Joy Project of the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA).

The AMAA's newly appointed Armenian Children's Christmas Joy Committee, chaired by Lucy Janjigian, has been charged with the responsibility of collecting the Christmas gifts distributed to orphans and children of impoverished families in Armenia, Georgia, and Karabagh. Each Armenian Children's Christmas Joy package will include the popular coloring Christmas story booklet published annually by the AMAA, and the following suggested items for children age 3-16.

One pack of colored pencils

Crayons

Five #2 yellow pencils

One pencil sharpener

One ruler

One eraser

One bottle of stick glue

One calculator

One small spiral notebook

Three ball point pens

One bar of soap

One toothpaste tube

One children's toothbrush

A small toy and Lollipops

A traveling game

Yes, I would like to provide a blessed Christmas season for orphans and needy children in Armenia, Karabagh and Georgia.

Enclosed please find

----- Christmas Joy Packages for ----- children.

----- U.S. Dollars for ----- Armenian Children's Christmas Joy packages.

Name _____

Address _____

(Make tax-deductible checks payable to AMAA, earmarked for Christmas Joy Package)

Donors may enclose signed Christmas cards for the recipients of their gifts.

In lieu of gift packages, \$5.00 donations for each package, may be sent to the AMAA's ongoing Armenia Children's Christmas Joy Project.

Can you help? Your donation will bring a little cheer into the lives of Armenian orphans and needy children, and your act of love will help children of Armenia understand the meaning of Christmas

Packages or donations for the Armenian Children's Christmas Joy Project, may be sent to Armenian Missionary Association of America, 31 West Century Road, Paramus, NJ 07652. In order for the packages to reach Armenia in due time, it would be greatly appreciated if you would mail your donations to the AMAA Headquarters as soon as possible.

Armenian Missionary Association of America
31 West Century Road
Paramus, NJ 07652

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